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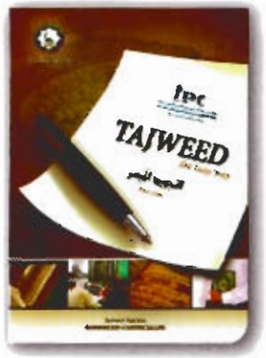

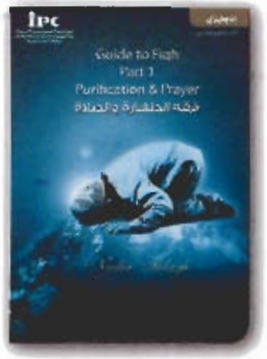

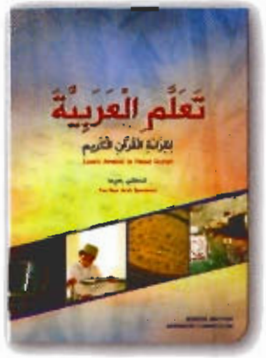

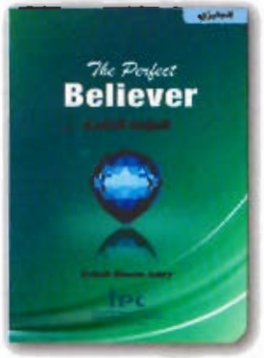

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What you know about Islam?

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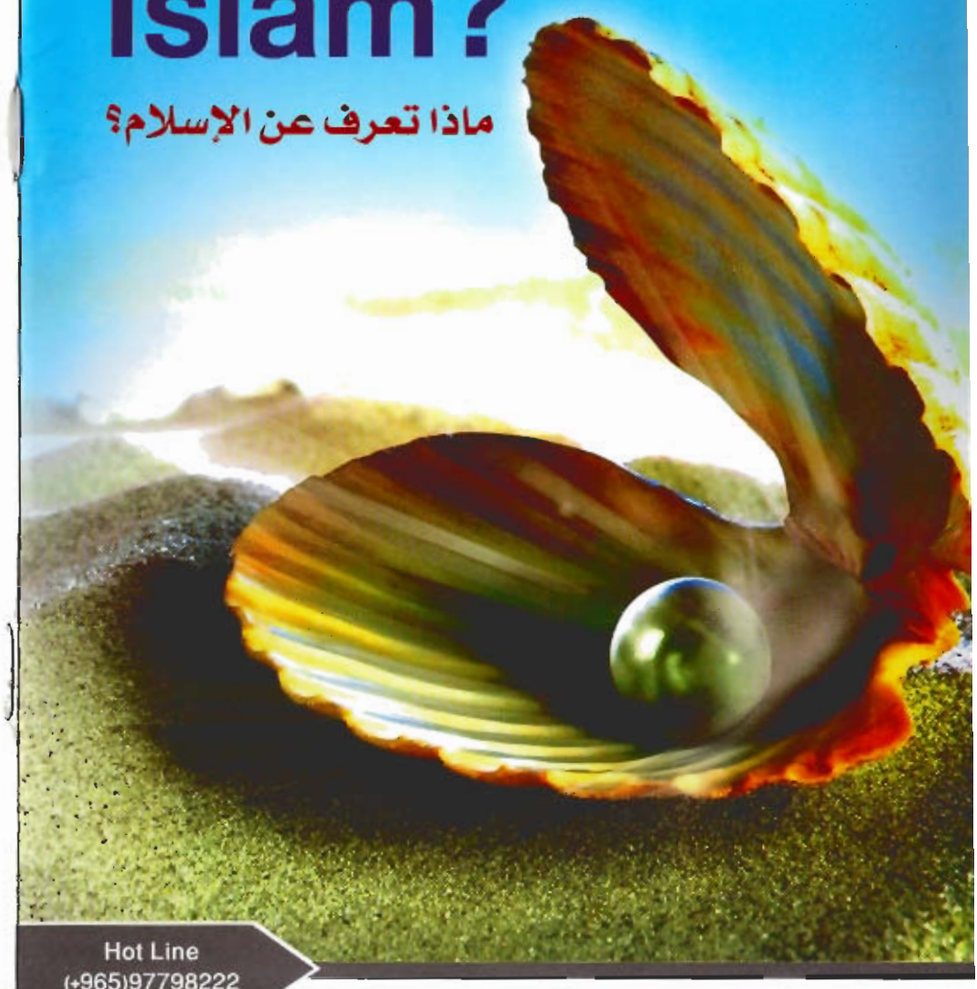

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WHAT DO YOU ACTUALLY *KNOW* ABOUT ISLAM ?

Dr Abdullah Al-Qenaei

5th Edition

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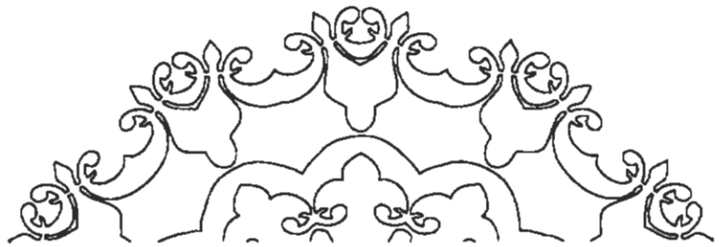

It is important not to judge the teachings of Islam based upon the actions of some Muslims. Like every other community there are a few 'bad apples' and it is unfortunate that the media sometimes focuses on these individuals in the Muslim community.

To a sincere seeker of truth...

Preface

I do not intend to twist your mind or change your faith, my purpose and aim is to make you acquainted with the message of Islam for the sake of knowledge, and it is up to you whether to accept it or reject it.

"There is no compulsion in religion; Truth stands out clearly from falsehood" *(The Qur'an, 2: 256).*

Abdullah

What is Islam ?

Islam is a religion and a way of life. It means submission, devotion, and obedience to God, the Lord of the heavens and the earth. Therefore, a Muslim is someone who submits himself to God. That is the reason why every prophet and messenger of God and their followers were by definition 'Muslims', as stated in the Qur'an.

"Whoever submits His whole self to Allah and is a doer of good,- He will get his reward with his Lord; on such shall be no fear, nor shall they grieve" *(The Qur'an, 2: 112).*

Islam is the religion of God and the same message which all the prophets and messengers of Almighty God came with, including Adam, Noah, Abraham, Moses, John the Baptist, Jesus and finally Muhammad - may the peace and blessings of God be upon them. Therefore, Muslims believe in, love, and respect all the prophets and messengers of Almighty God.

"The messenger believes in what has been revealed to him from his Lord, and (so do) the believers; they all believe in Allah and His angels and His books and His messengers; We make no difference between any of His messengers; and they say: We hear and obey, our Lord! your forgiveness (do we crave), and to you is the eventual course" *(The Qur'an, 2:285).*

Islam aims to preserve the basic rights of human beings, establishing security and peace in society and the world as a whole. Islam urges its followers to be kind, polite, decent, and good citizens in a society. Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him) said : "The best among you are those who have the best manners and character" (Bukhari, 56).

What is Islam all about ?

Islam calls for, and nurtures a loving and direct relationship between 'God' and 'humans' with no intercessors or intermediaries

"Is it to Allah alone that sincere devotion (and obedience) is due" *(The Qur'an, 39:3).*

When you pray, you pray directly to God, and when you wont to repent from your sins, you ask God directly for forgiveness.

"And when My servants ask you concerning Me, then surely I am very near; I answer the prayer of the suppliant when he calls on Me" [The Qur'an, 2:186] and "And your Lord says, Call upon Me; I will respond to you" *(The Qur'an, 40:60).*

Islam is the religion of pure human nature and clority. It urges and calls its followers to ask about all issues or problems they may encounter or endure, from the simple problems of their every day life to the deepest, most complex and also the most incomprehensible questions of their existence.

"So ask the people of knowledge if you do not know"
(The Qur'an, 16:43)

'People of knowledge' refers to the experts in the various fields known for their expertise.

In Islam, the whole doctrine is clearly explained, therefore there are no obscure or mysterious components to the belief.

"Allah would explain to you and guide you by the examples of those who were before you, and would turn to you in mercy. Allah is All-knowing, All-wise. And Allah would turn to you in mercy; but those who follow vain desires would have you go immensely astray. Allah would lighten your (difficulties): For man was created weak (in flesh)" *(The Qur'an, 4:26-28).*

Islam is not a religion of monasticism or separation from the worldly life. On the other hand, it does not allow the uncontrolled indulgence of worldly pleasures and desires. It teaches us to nourish and satisfy our soul and spiritual needs as much as we need food and provision for our body. It is a complete social system which promotes a lifestyle based on moderation, embracing both religious and mundane affairs, and considers them complementary to one another: neither aspect should prevail at the expense of the other.

"But seek, with that (wealth) which Allah has bestowed on you, the home of the Hereafter, and forget not your portion of legal enjoyment in this world, and be kind as Allah has been good (kind) to you, and seek not mischief in the land" *(The Qur'an, 28:77).*

Islam places men and women all equal before their Lord regardless of their race, tongue, national origin, appearance, wealth and social status. The criterion for differentiation among them arises in their compliance with the divine regulations.

"O mankind! We have created you from a male and a female, and have made you into nations and tribes so that you may know one another. Verily, the noblest of you, in the sight of Allah, is the best in conduct. Allah is All-Knowing, All-Aware"
[The Qur'an, 49:13].

The most pivotal benefits that Islam provides for the individual are:

1. True happiness and inner peace.
2. Practical guidance in leading a good life.
3. A correct understanding of human nature.
4. Forgiveness from all previous sins.
5. The gateway to eternal Paradise.
6. Salvation from Hell-fire.

In order to gain such benefits and much more, there is primarily one basic step to take: It is to bear witness that there is none worthy of worship besides Allah and that Muhammad is his servant and messenger. This is what we call 'Testimony of Faith', which is the first pillar in Islam. Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him) said:

"Islam has been built on five (pillars), testifying that there is none worthy of worship except Allah and that Muhammad is the messenger of Allah, establishing the Prayers, paying the Zakat (the annual poor due), making the Pilgrimage to the House (in Mecca, once in a lifetime) and fasting in Ramadhan" *[Bukhari, 8 - Muslim, 16].*

It is important not to let our mind be framed by barriers or limitations that may discourage us, such as the use of the Arabic language. The meaning of 'Allah' is in fact simply 'Almighty God' and it is an exclusive title which no-one else besides Him has been given, in all of human history.

When I use the word 'Allah' I mean the same God that created Adam and Eve, the same God that sent prophets such as Abraham, Job, Lot, David, Jesus and Mohammad peace and blessings be upon them. I do not mean a different God than the God that spoke to Moses, and split the

sea for him. I mean the exact same God that saved Noah in the ark and Jonah in the Whale. I mean the exact same God that created Jesus in the womb of Virgin Mary.

Even Arab Christians use the word 'Allah' when they refer to the Creator of the Universe. You can verify this in the Arabic translations of the Holy Bible.

Allow me now to explain what is meant by the 'Testimony of Faith'

The first part of the 'Testimony of Faith'

According to the Qur'an, the final revelation, no being is worthy of worship except Allah, and Allah is Absolutely One and Absolutely Unique:

"Say: He is Allah, the One and Only; He is the eternal, the absolute. He was not begotten nor does He beget, and there is none like unto Him" *[The Qur'an, 112:1-5].*

Allah (may He be exalted) alone caused all things to exist when there was nothing

"And among His signs are the night and the day and the sun and the moon; do not prostrate to the sun nor to the moon; but prostrate to Allah Who created them, if Him it is that you serve".
[The Qur'an, 41:37].

He sustains and maintains creation without any need from it, and nothing happens in the creation except what He allows to happen.

"Allah is Creator of all things, and He is Guardian over all things" *[The Qur'an, 39:62].*

In recognition of this reality, Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessing be upon him) used to often say: "There is no movement nor power except by Allah's will".

Allah (may He be exalted) has the most magnificent names and the sublime perfect attributes as mentioned in the Qur'an and the teachings of the Prophet (peace and blessing be upon him).

"He is Allah the one and only, than Whom there is no other god besides him, the Knower of the invisible and the visible. He is the Beneficent, Merciful. He is the Sovereign Lord, the Holy One, Peace, the Keeper of Faith, the Guardian, the Majestic, the Compeller, the Superb. Glorified be Allah from all that they ascribe as partner (unto Him)." *[The Qur'an, 59:22-24].*

The question, however, usually arises: Why should we worship the Creator? The answer is simply: Because He is worthy of our veneration and worship and to Him belongs all ultimate perfection. So we should acknowledge this perfection as well as such bounties bestowed upon us by Allah (may He be exalted) : our eyesight, hearing, sense of smell, sense of taste, heartbeat and many more, all we have received as a gifts from the Creator. The Qur'an tells us:

"Whoever goes right, then he goes right only for the benefit of his own self. And whoever goes astray, then he goes astray to his own loss. No bearer of burdens can bear the burden of another" *[The Qur'an, 17:15].*

Therefore, we should acknowledge Allah (as His beneficiaries) and show him praise, devotion, and obedience.

The second part of the "Testimony of Faith"

At around 570 AD, Muhammad (peace and blessing be upon him), was born in Arabia. Orphaned at an early age, he was brought up by his uncle and grandfather. Among his people he was known to have the best character and gave the finest example of being upright, merciful, compassionate, truthful, generous, and distant from all evil characteristics.

Whoever knew him well, or read his legacy, was fascinated and enchanted by him. Michael Hart in his book, 'The 100', studied the history of 100 of the most influential people in history and ranked them accordingly, he said: **"My choice of Muhammad to lead the list of the world's most influential persons may surprise some readers and may be questioned by others, but he was the only man in history who was supremely successful on both the religious and secular levels".**

Also, Jules Masserman, a US psychoanalyst, in TIME magazine (July 15, 1974) said: **"Perhaps the greatest leader of all times was Muhammad".** Koren Armstrong, a British feminist and former nun, in her book: Muhammad: A Biography of The Prophet, wrote: **"In such a primitive world, what Muhammad achieved for women was extraordinary. The very idea that a woman could be witness or could inherit anything at all in her own right was astonishing".**

It is worth mentioning that Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessing be upon him) was an illiterate man (during his entire life), he was unable to read or write.

"And you were not (able) to recite a book before this (book came), nor are you (able) to transcribe it with your right hand: In that case, indeed, would the talkers of vanities have doubted" *[The Qur'an, 29:48].*

So when the book we call the 'Qur'an', so profound with its strength, power, eloquence and beauty, was revealed to Muhammad (peace and blessing be upon him) it was by itself, and still is to our day, the greatest sign, miracle and proof that this message came from Allah, and that Muhammad is His prophet and messenger.

"(This is) a Book (the Qur'an), which We have sent down to you, full of blessings that they may ponder over its verses, and that those with intelligence may reflect" *[The Qur'an, 38:29].*

The people of Egypt in the time of Pharaoh were known for their powers of magic and sorcery. Hence Moses (peace and blessing be upon him) was sent to them with similar yet overwhelming signs. Moses was given the power to confront the sorcerers, unlike anyone else in his time.

In the time of Jesus Christ (peace and blessing be upon him), the son of Mary (peace and blessing be upon her), the children of Israel were known for their knowledge of medicine. Consequently Jesus Christ came with medical cures (bringing back the sight and curing the leper etc) that could not be bettered by anyone in his time (indeed, up until today).

The Arabs, being the people of the desert, they had no art, industry, or science. Yet, they were known for their exquisite poetry. Allah (may He be

exalted) challenged the Arabs to produce a whole book of equal beauty to the Qur'an, but they could not fulfil this challenge

"Or do they say, "He fabricated the (Message)"? Nay, they have no faith! Let them then produce a recital like unto it,- If (it be) they speak the truth!" *[The Qur'an, 52:33-34].*

The challenge was then decreased to ten chapters, but still they could not fulfil it

"Or they may say, "He forged it," Say, "Bring forward ten chapters forged, like unto it, and call (to your aid) whomsoever you can, other than Allah!- If you speak the truth!" *[The Qur'an, 11:13].*

Finally, the challenge was decreased to only one chapter, yet they were not able to do so.

"Or do they say, "He forged it"? say: "Bring then a Chapter like unto it, and call (to your aid) anyone you can besides Allah, if you speak the truth!" *[The Qur'an, 10:38].*

And still today this challenge has not and will not be met

"Say: "If the whole of mankind and Jinn were to gather together to produce the like of this Qur'an, they could not produce the like thereof, even if they backed up each other with help and support." *[The Qur'an, 17:88].*

Surely this is one of many proofs that the 'Qur'an' is from a divine source
With this great miracle, the Qur'an, Allah (may He be exalted) has set severol rational and scientific approaches and arguments for all mankind to ease their quest for the truth;

"No falsehood can approach it from before or behind it: It is sent down by One Full of Wisdom, Worthy of all Praise."
[The Qur'an, 41:42].

Allow me to give you a few examples of both...

The rational argument :

Allah (may He be exalted) has said:

"Were they created by nothing or were they themselves the creators? Or did they create the heavens and the earth? Rather, they have no firm belief." *[The Qur'an, 52:35-36].*

Suppose that you travel in the countryside where nothing is in sight except a plain land. A few months later, you return to the same plot of land and find a well constructed building. How did it come into existence? We can come with three distinct explanations, either: (1) it came into existence by chance or coincidence? (2) it has built itself? (3) a builder has built it? As for the first and second explanations, they are illogical and unscientific, so we are therefore left with the third.

Consequently, Allah (may He be exalted) asks the people who deny His existence: "were they themselves the creators? ". Since they are not going to acknowledge that they were created by a Creator, then the other choice is that they were the creators, and that is an impossibility! If they themselves were not the creators, then what is the answer? Someone must have created them. It is obvious that 'nothing' comes from 'nothing' and since there is a something (i.e. the universe), then there must be a Creator. Every building has a builder, every book has a writer, and the creation has a Creator.

And in order to indicate to them that humanity compared to the heavens and earth (in its majesty, vastness, and its greatness) is incomparable, Allah (may He be exalted) then said: "or did they create the heavens and the earth?". Therefore humans should not be arrogant to ascribe everything to their own greatness and consider themselves the masters and the centre of the universe, as very often is the case in the world today.

The Qur'an says : "Have you seen that which you emit? Is it you who creates it, or are We the Creator? We have decreed death among you, and We are not to be outdone In that We will change your likenesses and produce you in that [form] which you do not know. And you have already known the first creation, so will you not remember? And have you seen that [seed] which you sow? Is it you who makes it grow, or are We the grower? If We willed, We could make it [dry] debris, and you would remain in wonder, [Saying],

"Indeed, we are [now] in debt; Rather, we have been deprived." And have you seen the water that you drink? Is it you who brought it down from the clouds, or is it We who bring it down? If We willed, We could make it bitter, so why are you not grateful? And have you seen the fire that you ignite? Is it you who produced its tree, or are We the producer? We have made it a reminder and provision for the travelers, So exalt the name of your Lord, the Most Great." *[The Qur'an, 56:58-74].*

Imagine, for a moment, being in a ship in the middle of the ocean. Suddenly a violent wind overtakes you. The waves surge from all sides, so huge and powerful to overthrow your ship and drown you. You try your best to master the vessel, but you quickly realise that you are being overwhelmed by the forces of nature. You call for help but no one answers! What would you do in this case? Wouldn't your natural disposition call for someone High in the skies and a Supreme power i.e. the Creator (Lord)?!

Both common sense and intelligence tells us that if there is a God, then God has to be first cause and He will be the uncreated Creator of everything else. Therefore asking the question: 'Who created God?' is nonsensical and to deny a Creator is irrational and superstitious. Only through the final divine revelation (the Qur'an), confusion can be removed.

The above verses are strong logical arguments for someone who denies the existence of God, and has no answer to the question of where we have all came from!

The scientific argument :

It is important, first of all, to clarify that the Qur'an is a 'book of signs' and 'guidance' and it is not a 'book of science', as its revelations and message encompass all aspects of human life.

"Verily this Qur'an guides to that which is most upright, and gives the glad tidings to the believers who work deeds of righteousness, that they shall have a magnificent reward" *[The Qur'an, 19:7].*

We must also realise that science explains the 'how' and not the 'why' and if we understand this we can approach the matter in a way that is complementary to both religion and science. The scientific arguments put forward in the Qur'an are there to prove that the revelation was, without any doubt, the word of our Creator i.e. Allah. Not only have none of these arguments ever proved contrary to the established facts of science in the course of history, but many of them have been proved correct only by modern science.

"We shall show them Our signs in the universe and in their own souls, until it becomes manifest to them that it is the truth" *[The Qur'an, 41:53].*

Modern science tells us that the heavens and the earth come from the same entity and they were separated afterwards. The Qur'an, revealed in the 7th century, tells us about this separation and who was responsible for it:

"Have not those who disbelieve know that the heavens and the earth were of one piece, and then We have parted them" *[The Qur'an, 21:30].*

Dr. Alfred Kroner (Professor of Geology) said: **"Somebody who did not know something about nuclear physics fourteen hundred years ago could not, I think, be in a position to find out from his own mind, for instance, that the earth and the heavens had the same origin."** Modern science also informs us that every living thing is made of water (H_2O); this is a well-established fact and common knowledge in biological sciences. Interestingly we read in the Qur'an, revealed more than 1400 years ago, in the end of same verse:

"We made from water every living thing, will they not then believe?" *[The Qur'an 21:30].*

And also: **"Allah has created every [living] creature from water. And of them are those that move on their bellies, and of them are those that walk on two legs, and of them are those that walk on four. Allah creates what He wills. Indeed, Allah is over all things competent."** *[The Qur'an, 24:45]*

and **"And it is He who has created from water a human being and made him [a relative by] lineage and marriage. And ever is your Lord competent [concerning creation]"** *[The Qur'an, 25:54].*

Interestingly, the Qur'an describes the growth and development of the human embryo in the womb of the mother in several passages. The Qur'an says:

"O mankind! if you are in doubt about the Resurrection, (consider) that We created you out of dust, then out of sperm, then out of a leech-like clot, then out of a morsel of flesh, partly formed and partly unformed, in order that We may manifest (our power) to you; and We cause whom We will to rest in the wombs for an appointed term..." *[The Qur'an, 22:5].*

Dr. Keith Moore (Professor of Anatomy) said: **"It is clear to me that these statements must have come to Muhammad from God (or Allah), because almost all of this knowledge was not discovered until many centuries later. This proves to me that Muhammad must have been a messenger of God".**

These are only a few examples of the many scientific miracles of the Qur'an; for many centuries they have been standing up to the challenge of the sincere seeker of truth. Not only to prove the divine origin of the revelation, but also to draw the attention to the wonders of Allah's creation in a very eloquent and powerful manner. Encouraging people to seek knowledge and thereby increase their faith.

"Those who truly fear Allah, among His servants, are those who have knowledge: for Allah is Exalted in Might, Oft-Forgiving"
[The Qur'an, 35:28].

The Proposal

If you decide to accept the 'Testimony of Faith' i.e. to embrace Islam, I would like to congratulate you on your first step towards true success in this life and the hereafter

"Whoever submits himself to Allah, and does good, he has indeed taken hold of the firmest thing which one can grasp: and with Allah rests the end and decision of (all) affairs" *[The Qur'an, 31:22].*

Being a Muslim entails wilful submission and active obedience to Allah, and living in accordance with His message.

"Does He not know, Who he created? And He is the Knower of the subtleties, the Aware." *[The Qur'an, 67:14].*

It is the greatest of gifts and all praise must be due to Allah for showing us the light, where we would otherwise struggle eternally in the darkness of our confusion.

"Allah is the guardian of those who believe. He brings them out of the darkness into the light" *[The Qur'an, 2:257].*

"O you who believe! Fear Allah (Be mindful of your duty towards him), and believe in His Messenger, and He will bestow on you a double portion of His Mercy: He will provide for you a Light by which you shall walk (straight in your path), and He will forgive you (your past): for Allah is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful." *[The Qur'an, 57.28].*

Muslims have certain obligations towards one another one of which is giving sincere advice. Our Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessing be upon him) said:

"Allah will not cease to help His servant as long as that servant is helping his brother " *(Muslim, 2699).*

Therefore I would like to advise the following:

1. Don't expect that you will comply right away with all the regulations.
2. Take it easy, step by step, so as to make your belief pleasant to yourself.
3. Be sincere to yourself, and have sincerity towards Allah.
4. Start to learn and read the authoritative sources of Islam. (The Qur'an and the Teachings of Prophet Muhammad).
5. Understand that you are responsible for your actions and capable of fulfilling your duties.

The advice I have given to many new Muslims is not only a pleasure for me to give, but is also my duty and sincere concern. Abu Huraira (a great companion of the prophet) reported that Allah's messenger (peace and blessings be upon him) said:

"Six are the rights of a Muslim over another Muslim. It was said to him: O Allah's Messenger, what are these?

Thereupon he said: When you meet him, offer him greetings; when he invites you to a feast, accept it; when he seeks your council give him, and when he sneezes and says: " All praise is due to Allah," you say 'May Allah show mercy to you' ; and when he's ill, visit him; and when he dies, follow his bier (to the cementry)" *(Muslim, 5379).*

Universal brotherhood is a central point and crucial element of Islam, and a beautiful and precious value rarely found in a modern world driven by empty materialism and individualism. The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) has told us:

"None of you truly believes until he loves for his brother - or his neighbour - what he loves for himself." *(Bukhari, 12 and Muslim,64).*

I encourage you to take the first steps to initiate friendship with your brothers/ sisters in faith, to visit your local masque (masjid) and ask for advice and for reading material. A crucial book to start with is 'Bearing True Witness' by Dr Laurence B. Brown (www.leveltruth.com). The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) said:

"The believers are, to each other, like a building, each part supporting the rest." *(Bukhari, 481 and Muslim, 2585).*

From now on you are not alone on this path, for every single person embracing the true religion pleases Allah immensely and is a great delight for all Muslims.

"And help one another in goodness and piety, and do not help one another in sin and aggression" *(The Qur'an, 5:2).*

Even if you don't accept Islam now, I would like to ask you to keep an open mind and an open heart, and to thank you for taking the time to read this booklet.

Final remark

I would finally like to remind you that we all face death and we don't know when! As such this is out of our hands, so we therefore need to be prepared. Isn't the one who accepts this reality and prepares for it using his intelligence better than the one who tries to forget it and is taken by surprise?

"Say:"The Death from which you flee will truly overtake you: then you will be sent back to the Knower of the invisible and the visible: and He will tell you (the truth of) the things that you did!" *(The Qur'an, 62:8).*

May Allah guide us all to the right path, Amen.

Please send your comments and queries to :
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EMAIL: **a_alqenaei@hotmail.com**
TWITTER: **@DrABQ**

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What did they say about Islam?

"After September 11 the media had a lot to say about Muslims and Islam. Almost all of it was bad. I've never been a person to take things at face value so I tried to find out the truth behind Islam. I spoke to a Muslim colleague who gave me a copy of the Qur'an and I bought many books on the topic. And not just any books - books covering faith as well as its history and people. Some things were good and some bad.
Over time I came to know more Muslims and was almost always impressed with their kindness, honesty, sincerity and deep belief in God and peace. After a few years I felt I had finally found a spiritual path that was both meaningful and worked for me. It has definitely changed my life for the better!"

W.H - USA

"After embracing Islam I felt that I had finally begun to fulfill the purpose of my creation and live in harmony with the true reality of life and death. The contentment and feeling of inner happiness cannot be paralleled by any worldly pursuit. Only submission to the Creator can achieve this".

Dr. Reeves - England

Please read what they had to say:

"Embracing Islam came as a result of a long search for the truth and also signified a fresh start in my life as a new man. Not only believing but also declaring the submission to the will of the Creator meant, from the very beginning, honesty to myself and to the world, inner happiness and satisfaction for knowing that life is a wonderful gift, that our existence is deeply meaningful, and that true success is not measured with our wealth and appearance, or achieved in the race for pawer, celebrity and fugacious values, but in our status in the sight of Allah, in the pursuit of an invaluable reward which will last for eternity".

Dr Emanuel (Mahdi Girbril) Gullo - Italy

"I approached Islam from an Atheist and very sceptical view. I began by reading an Islamic book presenting confirmation of God / Allah through scientific evidence in the Quran. This reading sparked me with questions and soon led to further investigation. Quickly I found myself scientifically, statistically and rationally unable to refute the strong evidence which was presented to me. It is with great pleasure and enthusiasm that I encourage you to learn more about Islam and eagerly anticipate your embracement too".

James - England

Life's Harvest

The years that I wasted
I truly regret
I could have accomplished
Much more I suspect
The pursuits of youth
With no worries or cares
And taking for granted
All the good things I shared
Was my path preordained
But the time really comes
When I look over my shoulder
Asking what have I done
Realization comes with the passing of time
That something I needed was there and was mine
Awareness and guidance, an eternal plan
Was revealed when the Koran was placed in my hand
How grateful I am for the way of Islam
With the message Mohammed brought from. Allah to man
Muslim brothers and sisters I hope I can be
Sincere and worthy in my destiny
For the kindness and love shown to a convert like me
When I stood before you and said I BELIEVE

Mr. Stanley Smith
Bath - England
8/12/2005